



*Colonel Sven Wiberg
April 28, 1865 - October 29, 1947*



Grandpa was born 135 years ago on Friday, April 28, 1865 - an auspicious year. 1865 saw the end of the American Civil War, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln (April 14, 1865 - 11 days before Grandpa was born), the founding of The Salvation Army by William Booth (the organization Grandpa devoted his life to), and the making of the family cradle by our Great Grandfather, John Conrad (which is another story altogether and will be recorded under John Conrad's name).

Grandpa was born in Örtofta, a small sugar manufacturing town in southern Sweden, on April 28, 1865. He was the only son of Johanna Jönsdotter and Sven Hansson. Following the tradition of that time, Sven should have been named Sven Svensson (i.e., son of Sven), however, that was not to be the case.

On Sunday, April 16, 1865, Grandpa's Father was competing with other young men in the churchyard in Örtofta. They were testing their strength to see who could lift the heaviest weight. Mom, in an interview I had with her in 1977, gave this account of what happened:

. . . he was a young married man and it was the custom of the young bloods - the young men of the church - after church services or between church services or something like that - to show their strength, ya know, and to pick up these big stones that were in the churchyard and he picked up a stone - this was Grandpa Wiberg's father [Sven Hansson] - he picked up a stone and somehow broke or strained or did something to his innards that caused his death.

As a result of these injuries, Great Grandfather Sven died five days later on Friday, April 21, 1865 -- seven days before his son Sven was born.

Johanna was only 20 when her husband died. Just a little over one year later, on May 25, 1866, Johanna married Anders Mårtensson. Grandpa became Anders' foster son and thus became known as Sven Andersson after the custom of the day.

While growing up I heard that Grandpa changed his name from Andersson to Wiberg because he thought there were too many Anderssons -- Grandma Lotten Andersson's name included. There is also the story that he changed his name to Wiberg to avoid a gambling debt. Mom says in the same interview:

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And the thing that he used to be so afraid of was that his children might have the tendency that he had to be a card shark. He was a card shark in his younger years. All he thought of was playing cards and whether he gambled or not I don't know, but he wouldn't have cards in his house. So evidently they had been a real stumbling block for him when he was a young man, but he got converted and he never played cards again - but he became a Salvationist then.

But both of these stories have recently been debunked. My friend Sven Wickberg thought the gambling story especially suspect so he, on my behalf, asked Lennarth Karlsson (a retired Swedish Salvation Army Officer who is currently [September, 2000] entering data about deceased, retired, and current Salvation Army Officers into the computer) if he could provide data about Colonel Sven Wiberg. The earliest record that Lennarth had on Sven Wiberg indicates that Grandpa probably changed his name from Andersson to Wiberg in 1889 (long before he met Grandma), which would be just about the time that Grandpa was converted in Jönköping. Lennarth also said: "Most officers with 'son' names 'got' new names. It has been said that HQ was behind this practice, but this is not documented."

He also laid the gambling story to rest with this explanation:

I have done a thorough investigation about this Viberg . . . but nothing has come forward that could throw any shadow over his character. If anything negative in this respect had been known, in Sweden or in England, he would never have received orders to the Training College.

But as Mom indicates, the lure of cards for Grandpa was one of his recollections of his sinful ways before he was converted. Anyhow, I personally, am delighted that his good name has been vindicated. Why he chose the name Wiberg (early on Grandpa wrote his name as Viberg) is speculation - I've heard it was because he admired a woman named Wiberg.



*Lotten and Sven
Algot, Johanna, Johan
Ernfrid*

Most of the pictures and information I have about Grandpa come from his step cousin, Torvald Åkesson, family letters, biographical information obtained from his funeral program, and (to a great extent) Brigadier Hjalmar Swembel. Brigadier Swembel wrote about Grandpa's life in the Swedish Salvation Army publication, *The Stridsropet* (The War Cry in America). Grandpa's story was published in 14 installments from September through December, 1968. When I went to Sweden in June of 2000, Ernfrid Andersson, Grandpa's nephew, presented me with a notebook containing a lovely picture of my Grandparents and his family and all of these articles. However, they are all in Swedish. . . but . . . my friend, Sven Wickberg saw the articles and very enthusiastically translated (loosely, he says) the stories for me. I video-taped him while he translated and thus I was able to transcribe the material when I returned home. So, fortunately, events transpired that allowed me (and you) to learn more about Grandpa. I humbly thank Brigadier Swembel, Ernfrid, and most especially Sven Wickberg for his and their labor of love.

Sven Andersson Wiberg
The Early Years



*Johanna Jönsdotter
and third husband,
Åke Bengtsson*

Share cropping seems to be almost universal. In Sweden this system is called arrendator.

Johanna and her first two husbands were sharecroppers. Sharecropping is an agreement between the landowner (Duke Jacob Bennet) and a person (Johanna and her husbands) who is ready to undertake farming in exchange for a certain portion of the produce. Johanna and her husbands “rented” their land from the Duke.

Johanna and her first two husbands farmed the land. Johanna’s third husband, Åke Bengtsson, operated a mill on the Duke’s land. Maj showed me the land where the mill (one of three) once stood and also the pile of stones which were once the foundation of Johanna and Åke’s home. We could not go over to the small island where the mills had been located because the bridge had long since collapsed. Maj said she used to swim in the river when she was a child; however, then the river had been much bigger and ran more swiftly. Torvald and Allan, Johanna and Åke’s grandchildren, had to walk across a huge pasture to and from school. It was often dark when they came home from school and their father, Emil, would come and get them and light their way home with a lantern. Maj said it was a long walk in knee high snow for two little boys.

Most of what follows is from Brigadier Swembel’s articles and is retold by me. Wherever the Brigadier has used the name “Wiberg” I have substituted the name “Grandpa.”

*The Swembels
Hjalmar Swembel was one
of Grandpa’s Cadets in
Training College in
Sweden*



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Sven grew up on the Duke's land with his mother, Johanna, and his stepfather, Anders Mårtensson. His mother was a good and strong Skanian housemother. After Johanna remarried, she kept the land. Sven's stepfather, Anders, was a good and thorough man. Grandpa remembered both him and his mother with undivided joy. He remembered his childhood as a time full of happiness and free of sorrows. His stepfather taught him to ride a horse. So that the boy would not be thrown off (he was riding without a saddle), Anders bound Grandpa's feet together below the stomach of the horse, but Grandpa soon learned to ride without this aide.

Torvald (Grandpa's half nephew) remembered hearing this story about Grandpa: Grandpa must have been 14-15 years old and Daddy Mortensson thought that Sven needed a new outfit and gave him money to go to Lund - the nearest town - to buy a new set of clothing. Grandpa liked that idea very much and proudly went off to Lund. When he returned, he had no new clothing. Instead he had bought something much more interesting -- a double barreled shot gun!

It is not recorded what Daddy Mortensson or Johanna's reactions were to Grandpa's purchase!

Grandpa told Brigadier Swembel this story of an incident that occurred when he was in school:

His teacher was a rather decent man, but for some reason he began to suspect that Grandpa didn't do his arithmetic on his own, but looked up the answers in the back of his math book (there was a book with answers called faciten in Swedish). The teacher asked Grandpa to give him the answer book and Grandpa refused. The teacher repeated his order and Grandpa again refused saying: "No, I bought it with my own money and you won't have it." Then he was slapped. The teacher took the math book with the answers and left, but after a few weeks the book was returned to Sven because even without the faciten his sums were correct.

When school ended Sven was confirmed in Örtofta's church as was the custom. Usually after young people were confirmed, this ended their school life and they went out and served as hands in other trades or other farms, but Grandpa's stepfather's health was declining so Grandpa stayed home and helped with the farm. Anders Mårtensson died (January 12, 1885) when Sven was 20.

Brigadier Swembel (remember, I can't read Swedish) indicates that Grandpa left Örtofta when he was 16; but he also says that Grandpa left when Anders died, in which case Grandpa would have been 20. I'm going to say he left when he was 21.

This meant that Sven and his mother were responsible for the farm and the younger siblings. Two years later Grandpa's younger stepbrother "Oscar" took over this responsibility and Sven left to go out in life.

Brigadier Swembel says (and I can read this) that Grandpa's brother "Oscar" took over the running of the farm when Grandpa left. Torvald, in the information he provided me about Grandpa's siblings, never mentions an Oscar. Grandpa's step brother, Johan, might have taken over the responsibilities of the farm. Or, another option, the Brigadier may have meant Johanna's new (and third) husband, "Åke" Bengtsson, whom she married one year after Anders died. If Grandpa left after the marriage, he would have been 21 years old; I think this option is the most logical. If I ever find out the exact date that Grandpa moved to Jönköping I'll revise the text.

All of which means that Grandpa left home at age 16 or 21.

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Grandpa started his career just a short distance away from the homestead in Eslöv. There he worked for a corn merchant - someone who bought corn from the farmers and then sold it to the mills. Grandpa did not stay at this job very long. Perhaps because he heard that there were better paying jobs at the mills in Jönköping, he very shortly left Eslöv for the mills.

There they were very grateful for his very broad shoulders and his willingness to work. In the 1880's this company had four mills at the high falls which are somewhere outside of town. There was very little water but the water had to drop from an enormous height, which compensated for the dearth of water, and thus they were able to power the mills quite effectively.

When Grandpa was young, he went to the State Lutheran Church with his father and mother. At that time everybody had to go to church - it was more or less compulsory - or at least traditional - to go to church on a Sunday. As a child, church seemed to him too big, too high, too uncomfortable (his feet didn't touch the floor), the seats were too hard, the sermons were too long, and last, but not least, too difficult to understand. Everything about church seemed dark and heavy. Therefore he didn't long for the church in Jönköping but instead took part in all kinds of pleasures (playing cards?).

This lifestyle became boring and stale after a while and his restlessness led him to look for something new. He decided to try the local Methodist church. He was curious to see how the Methodists differed from the staid Lutheran church, and he was pleased to discover that the Methodist songs were lighter and the sermons were shorter and, in his opinion, that was a definite plus.

In the spring of 1888 a strange, loud, rambunctious, group of people came marching into town bringing with them the message, the songs, and the means to banish Grandpa's boredom forever more. The sensational rumor went through the town that The Salvation Army, this peculiar new movement, would "open fire" in Jönköping. What kind of an Army this was, nobody really knew, so everybody was curious. Some said The Army was composed of women and men who were impudent enough to go from house to house without being invited and that they asked extremely personal questions about being saved and about going to heaven. Some people said that they were bad people and others thought that they were good people. But Grandpa's first impression was - "good or bad, I don't care - they seem courageous and valiant and that's good enough for me!"

In the beginning, nobody dared let the Salvationists use any public hall and perhaps that was quite natural, so The Army's first meeting was held inside the green, semi-enclosed, yard of the copper tinker. A provisional platform was built of wagons and old doors and the yard and the street outside were packed with people, including Grandpa. It was Ascension Day and the afternoon was unusually chilly, but the leader of the meeting, Captain Henning Apelkvist, took off his overcoat and preached with such conviction and fervor that the sweat came pouring down his brow and covered his face. Grandpa had never in his life seen or heard such jubilation, such theatrics, such mesmerizing gestures and he said to himself, "if this is religion, then I want to become religious." He left the meeting with a growing interest in The Salvation Army and had to alter his ideas about the "readers" ("readers" read books; not only The Salvation Army, but all the free churches, put stress on reading, - especially the Bible).



Sven Andersson Wiberg
` 1885

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After a few weeks The Army was admitted into the Methodist chapel where Grandpa used to go. The doors had been opened, the chapel was overflowing with people, and, especially pleasing to Grandpa, there was a new sound of trumpets and singing. It was a strong meeting that caught him totally. He was struck as though by lightning by something the Captain said about being ready to meet God. Grandpa didn't feel ready at all. He prayed in his heart "Please Lord wait a little so that I have time to get ready."

The Army kept on coming back to Jönköping on Sundays to conduct meetings. The invitation went out in every meeting entreating all who were ready to give their lives to Christ to come forward to the altar and pray. Each time Grandpa fought the impulse to go forward to the penitent form. He felt very clearly that this was a critical turning point in his life, but wasn't sure if he had the courage to join these odd people and also wasn't sure if he was up to the task. Eventually the fight was over and Grandpa made his decision about this Army. As he had said before, "if this was religion, he liked it" and he was ready to join.

The decision finally having been made, he had only one thought: "How can I get to the penitent form?" The hall was crowded and he was up in the balcony. He wished that he could jump right down onto the hall floor, but that was unthinkable because he was too high. (Mom, in our interview, said that Grandpa actually did go over the balcony, saying he slid down the pole!) In the end he had to go out to the stairs and down to the entrance and finally fight his way into the hall against the stream of people who were leaving. But finally he made his way to the altar and there he knelt with many other people. A dear old Baptist brother put his hand on his shoulder and asked "Why have you come young man?" "To be saved" answered Grandpa. "Then you have come to the right place."

Along with Sven, I find it interesting that it was a Baptist who talked to Grandpa and not a Salvationist. He must have approved of what The Army was trying to accomplish.

Then he prayed for the seeker who soon felt the burden of sins falling off his shoulders and "that God's Spirit does witness together with my spirit that I am God's child." And so he was saved. His mind had been opened to new possibilities and he was eager to begin his new life.

It took some months before The Army began regular services in Jönköping, but there is no doubt that Grandpa wanted to become a soldier. Hanna Ouchterlony announced in one of the first meetings that all who wanted to become recruits (soldiers) should report at a certain time to the officers' barracks (the officers' living quarters) and Grandpa accepted the invitation.

Grandpa was accepted as a soldier in The Salvation Army's Jönköping Corps and the courage of his convictions were tested right away. When he had been examined by the Captain and the recruit mark was to be put on the lapel of his coat, he asked to have it attached with a pin.



*The Salvation Army in Jönköping
~ 1885*

Sven explains that they used to have a little ribbon with red, blue, and yellow colors to show that you were a recruit. I don't know if that is still used, but we used to have it in Sweden - a kind of mark before you became a soldier.

Grandpa had a secret thought that if the mark proved to be awkward in some circumstances, it would be easy to just take it off and then put it back on again when going to meetings. But the Captain helped him over this temptation by resolutely sewing it on his coat. Poor Grandpa! This new life made him realize that the 100 kilo wheat sacks at the corn mill were easier to carry than this little badge on his lapel.

The Captain also told him to put the uniform on immediately so that "you can practice a little until tomorrow's meetings." Grandpa did not want that at all. "In time I will have to practice" he thought. So he wrapped the red things - probably a Guernsey and hat - into a parcel and put the parcel beneath his arm and walked home in peace and quiet, or so he thought. On his way he met a group of his old pals who hoped for a little fun at Grandpa's expense. They knew that Grandpa had become religious and went to this funny new Army. Grandpa's first feeling was that he was glad that he didn't have his uniform on because that would of course have incited them even more. But Grandpa became apprehensive and in his anxiety he pressed extra hard on the parcel causing the red uniform cap to pop right out of the parcel and onto the street - right in front of the laughing boys. He said this lesson taught him once and for all that he should wear his uniform for Christ openly and proudly. Never again did he try to "hide his light under a bushel."

Soon Grandpa felt God's call to serve on the "big field" (i.e., become an Officer in The Salvation Army). He didn't dare and didn't want to think that God required this of him but the inner voice was becoming very clear and insistent. For some time he tried, like Moses, to make excuses, but after some weeks' fight he said to God: "Because You call me I will go, but You, God, will have to answer for the consequences."

This surprised me, because I was brought up to believe that you don't bargain with God.

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So when Commissioner Ouchterlony next visited Jönköping, Grandpa reported for officership. At that time the Army did not have the Candidates' Committee, so the Commissioner just asked him a few questions, spoke with his Corps Officer about him, and then she accepted Grandpa without more ado as a Candidate for Officership. He was asked to come up to Gävle on May 1, 1889, to start his training. So Grandpa took the second biggest step in his life - from being a Soldier in The Army to being an Officer in The Army. The only sure things in Grandpa's life right now were (1) that he had given his life to God and The Salvation Army and (2) he was convinced that God would answer for the consequences.

When Grandpa said his good-byes at the mill in Jönköping the miller was very surprised about his curious choice of career and said "when you get tired of that work you are welcome to come back here." Grandpa must have been pleased to hear these (implied) words of praise for his talents and work ethic.

Grandpa knew that he would go to Gävle to be trained as an officer and that he would have to stay at the most two months. They had very short training at that time. In Gävle, to his happy surprise, he was met by Henning Apelkvist, the same man who had inspired him by his preaching in the yard of Peter the Tinker. Henning had charge of the male cadets and also of the new one year old Corps in Gävle.

The Army was and is very dependant on music to attract people and to sway audiences, so it was quite a disappointment when Grandpa, during the course of training, found out he had no musical talents -- in fact, he was so lacking in musical talent that he was not allowed to sing with the other Cadets.

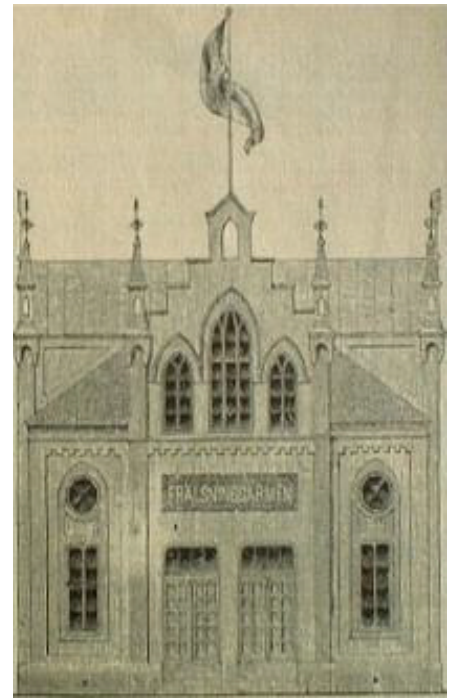
This is one trait that was not passed on to his descendants. He would be very proud of his musical progeny.

One day he felt especially downhearted. With heavy steps he went along the street. Everything was so new and so difficult. Would he manage to get through? Could he be a blessing to anyone? He worked with burning energy 17-18 hours a day selling War Crys and visiting - all with noticeable results. He was giving serious thought to returning to the mill.

Sven: A lot of people decided this was not a real job to walk around in a red crimson tunic and speak with people and have the Bible in hand and The War Cry in another, so many people had called him a lazy dog who did not have any real work.

As these thoughts were running through his head, he bumped headlong into another young man. This gentleman stopped not only because of the collision, but still more by seeing The Salvation Army uniform. Very quickly this stranger found the association in his mind and he roared a few lines from an Army song that often was sung in those days - "The Salvation Soldier never Dies."

Sven: It's a very old Swedish song - every verse ends with "But the Salvation soldier never dies." It talks about the hardships of being a soldier, but through it all, "The Salvation Army Soldier never dies."



*The Salvation Arm
in
Gävle*

This very strongly put message about the courage and steadfastness of The Salvation Army soldier came at just the right moment to inspire and comfort him. His pessimistic thoughts disappeared and he continued his mission with new courage.

One day he was told: “you have the sermon tomorrow.” He was panic stricken. He went up in the attic with his Bible so he could be alone and prayed and read. When the time came, he went up on the platform with heart pounding and preached. Years later he said that “although so many years have passed since then, and the meetings I have led can be counted in the thousands, I still find it a very heavy burden of responsibility every time I am about to preach. But after all, I am still glad that I feel it that way.”

The Cadets finished their education in Stockholm (perhaps in the attic room of the Stockholm #1 Corps). General William Booth made his third visit to Sweden during the summer of 1888 to preside at the inauguration of the Corps in Jönköping . The Salvation Army was not quite seven years old at this time. So it was at this Congress in Jönköping (the same Corps in which he was saved) that Cadet Sven Wiberg officially became a Salvation Army Officer, was promoted to Lieutenant, and received his first appointment - To Sundsvall - a place halfway up North.

In 1888 the town of Sundsvall had a huge fire. One of the victims of this fire was the Hall of the Temperance Movement which The Army rented for its meetings. So for the next two years the Salvationists had their summer meetings in a large tent. The strongest memories Grandpa had of this tent meeting time was about the leader of the Corps, Captain J. L. Janson, and how he fostered and tutored this young Lieutenant.



Sundsvall Tent

When Grandpa was to lead a meeting, the Captain helped him with a song, but when the sermon came, he went down from the platform and sat in the audience and made notes all the time. Afterwards he told Grandpa what he should have done differently and what he should have said in a different way. The Captain’s list was rather long, and it was rather tough on the young Lieutenant, but criticisms and instructions were made with love and good intentions, and Grandpa learned.

Around 1889-90 Lieutenant Wiberg and his assistant, Lieutenant Carlson, got orders to leave Sundsvall and go to Härnösand, which was about 30 miles north of Sundsvall.

As part of their Corps duties, they went visiting from house to house, knocking at each door, speaking to people about their souls, and inviting them to the meetings.

Sven: The Salvation Army regulations still (2000) have the order that every officer should use at least so and so many hours a week for visiting, but it’s not done much any more because not many people are at home during the day. However, when your Grandfather was an officer, visiting was still one of the most important functions of an Army Officer. In those days there were always people at home - the wife or for example or a tailor who conducted business “in house.”

In many cases they were thrown out or scorned, but in spite of that they did manage to attract a lot of new people and these people came to the meetings to see what this Salvation Army was all about. Many people also went to meetings to make trouble, so there were often riots. The Army found it necessary to have “throw out” Sergeants (in these days we would call them Welcome Sergeants) to “bounce” the mischief makers.

Grandpa tells a story of how persistent visitation paid off: A tailor he visited was against Christianity. He hated all religions. Most of all he hated The Salvation Army because they were so offensive; and after that he hated Grandpa who disturbed him in his home all the time. When Grandpa was thrown out, he wasn't polite enough to leave the tailor in peace; oh no, he came back again and again and tried over and over to speak to the angry man; one time the tailor was so angry he threatened him with a hot iron.

However, it never occurred to Grandpa that he should stop visiting this angry tailor. On his next visit he found that the tailor was ill. This time the tailor was not only angry, but also feeling very sorry for himself because he was not well enough to get out of bed to go harvest his potatoes. He shouted at Grandpa “That's a really nice God you have! He makes me sick so that I can't harvest my potatoes but have to leave them rotting in the earth.” Poor Grandpa had to leave the angry tailor and saying “God bless you” as he left hardly seemed adequate.

As he was leaving he had an idea -- he was used to hard labor and perhaps it would be a nice change to help this tailor with his potatoes. So he went outside the house and saw the tailor's wife and he said to her: “Have you got a spade?”

She looked up at him in surprise and probably was wondering why this brash young man wanted a spade - he who went about selling newspapers and talking about Jesus - but nevertheless she gave him the spade. Grandpa took the spade, asked the wife to get her basket, and told her that he would dig the potatoes and requested that she collect them and put them in her basket. He dug at an awful speed so that the earth and the potatoes flew about as though he had been a potato machine [which creates a nice picture but perhaps is a tad exaggerated, say I]. The next week Grandpa came as usual with his War Crys and his religious talk, but now the tailor sang a different tune. “Can the Lieutenant forgive me for being so angry and common with him?” [That's the way the Swedes speak to each other, Sven says.] Then after that there was a prayer for God's forgiveness and before the Lieutenant left the cottage this time the God Hater had been saved and was a new creature in Christ.



Grandpa didn't stay long at any one Corps. Perhaps this was because The Army was (under the direction of Hanna Ouchterlony) establishing Corps all over Sweden and young, enthusiastic Corps Officers were needed to inspire and get the Corps up and running. So Grandpa, in rather quick succession, was stationed in Härnösand (November, 1889), Wifta (April, 1890), Forsa (June, 1890), and Näliden (August, 1890).

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In September of 1890 Major Herman Lagercrantz (who was one of Grandpa's teachers when he was a Cadet) called Grandpa to Stockholm, made him a Captain and gave him new orders making him Corps Officer in Eslöv.

Grandpa's career sheet says he was made Captain in 1896. Between Brigadier Swembel's account and their career sheets, it's a little difficult to determine when my Grandparents received their ranks and when. The Salvation Army uses a military structure for their officers because they are an "Army" fighting for converts for the Lord and Christianity. The ranks have also changed over time - some added, some eliminated.

Grandpa and his assistant were not well received in Eslöv. The Corps was only one year old and had had only women officers up until their arrival. They were met by about 100 very angry male soldiers in Eslöv who threatened the young male officers and in no uncertain terms suggested that they should go away on the first train back to where they came from. They insisted that if they stayed they would either starve them out or kill them. But Grandpa considered these threats just part of the war and "dug in." During the first few weeks he fought hard but without much success; however, he was determined not to give in.

Then came Self Denial Week. Grandpa was in the habit of giving a part of his Army salary to the Self Denial Fund. He knew that because of the agitation against The Salvation Army he wouldn't be able to collect any money for The Army and thus he would not earn a salary. But he had a plan. He went to the biggest corn merchant in the town and offered to carry sacks for him for a week. He knew that the merchant would need a lot of extra hands at this time of the year and it was Grandpa's plan to give the money he earned to The Salvation Army as his contribution to the Self Denial Fund. He knew what a hard job this was but he was used to carrying sacks, although it had been five years since he'd carried any for the corn merchant. The sacks had to be carried from the railway wagons to the storehouse and then up a lot of stairs to the storage area.



When the other carriers saw him and understood that he was to carry sacks also, they were very interested and figured that they would put him out of commission in short order. He had to follow their pace, so they started very fast carrying sack after sack - but he matched them step for step and took no rests. They began running with their sacks but again he kept up with them and didn't tire.

In the afternoon they had to admit defeat and slowed the tempo. Finally they stopped and said "we can't keep this up. That's a very tenacious man. Why work our wits out when we can't tire him out?" Their animosity had changed to admiration for this strong and undauntable man. The news of Grandpa's stamina quickly spread and suddenly he was a hero. When the week was over he had money for the Self Denial Fund and many of his fellow workers also donated money. So the blockade against him was broken and The Salvation Army in Eslöv grew and thrived.

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The Salvation Army was in its infancy at this time and there was not much money available for expenses. In order to obtain money, they had meetings every night (where an offering was taken) and in the daytime (or after the meetings) they visited the taverns offering to sell them The Stridsropet. But this did not bring in much money and, as a result, there was rarely any money to pay the officers. Grandpa had been out in the field for some time before he received his first salary (allowance, as it was called then; only after all Corps expenses were paid was an Officer “allowed” money for personal expenses - and that rarely happened.). One day when Grandpa finished the bookkeeping for the previous week, he found that there was a little left over, and so he was delighted to tell his assistant that he could give him one crown, 25 ore. The Lieutenant was deeply moved and stammered “Well I shouldn’t have a salary. I don’t want any money from The Salvation Army.” The assistant really did need the money for new trousers, but rather than take it away from The Army, he worked for a farmer gathering hay to earn money for the trousers.

When asked in later life what he thought about his salary as an officer in The Salvation Army, he said: “At that time I didn’t think for a moment of either income or future position. The Salvation Army war had its daily portion of fight and happiness and that filled me completely. Money has never been my strong side. I was unreflectively sure inside that if I gave myself completely and honestly to The Salvation Army and its work, then God and The Salvation Army would take responsibility for my future. I am today a living and encouraging example of the truth of God’s Promise: “Seek ye first after his kingdom and his righteousness . . .”

In 1891 he was sent from Eslöv to Höganäs (April), Varberg (May), and Göteborg #3 (June). The Göteborg #3 Corps was in a very poor district called Majorna. Grandpa and his assistant, Gusta Miller, rented a hall that was situated so that it had its long side to the street; on the other side was an interior yard. Many of the locals came to The Salvation Army to cause trouble, so they had to shut the big entrance on the street and open the little one in the yard, but even so the mischief makers created enough disturbance to force cancellation of the meetings. The local constabulary did nothing to stop the thugs. Grandpa and his assistant, a strong and tall young man, were on their way to do some visitations one night, but on their way they saw a police constable in uniform sitting in the small, dark street - totally drunk. They knew that if a policeman was found drunk while on duty he would be fired. They also knew that this policeman was not a friend of The Army. They decided to take a very subtle Christian revenge on him. They went to him and tried to wake him up but it was useless. Between them they were strong enough to be able to carry him away, but they didn’t want to take him off his beat so they carried him to and fro the whole night - hour after hour - in the dark alley until the early morning. By then he had sobered enough that they were able to leave him. They had had their revenge!

The police constable realized the danger he had been in and that he had been saved by The Army officers. One day he told the story to one of his friends in the police force who in turn told it to another and very soon everybody knew The Army officers had done a very noble service for one of their own. They began to realize that perhaps these peculiar people were not so bad after all.

Soon they began arresting the hooligans and The Army Officers could once again open the front door to the Hall.

In the new year of 1892 Grandpa and his assistant were sent to Alingsås. Here things were more ordered but Grandpa missed the thrill that he had met in Eslöv and Göteborg - things were a bit dull. One morning he had cause to smile. During the night some ruffians had lifted off the doors of the hall and carried them away. Then Grandpa felt something was happening although he was sorry he was asleep when it happened.

Many Swedish Salvationists immigrated to America during 1891-92. Soon General William Booth received urgent requests from the United States for officers to minister to the Swedish populations. The General asked Commissioner Hanna Ouchterlony to go to America to assess the situation. Her recommendation was that Swedish speaking officers be sent to The United States as soon as possible.

As a result, The Army put out a call for volunteers. Grandpa was among the first to volunteer. He had no idea what this would involve, but he knew he was quite willing to go anywhere The Army wanted to send him. Soon, however, he got a message from Headquarters telling him that he had not been selected. Instead he was sent to Ystad in Skane. He was a bit disappointed, but this disappointment didn't last long. On his fourth Wednesday night in Ystad, Grandpa was with the band who were practicing in the soldiers' room when a telegram arrived for Grandpa from the Field Secretary. "Farewell on Sunday - Go to America via Göteborg on Monday morning." That meant he had only four days to finish work at the Corps and prepare to go to America to stay. He was in such a hurry to go that he didn't even remember that he would be passing through Örtofta on his way to Göteborg. If he had remembered, he probably would have sent a telegram saying "Pass Örtofta early Monday morning express for America" then surely his mother would have been standing at the station to wave to him as he passed.

So he and the other volunteers went from Göteborg to England on April 21, 1892, for a few weeks special training. While they were in London these officers worked at different Corps in and around London helping them with visitation, open air meeting, etc. Captain Viberg (as Grandpa was signing his name at the time) told about a visit to a family where a drunken man took up the fire fork (poker) to hit him, but Grandpa calmed him and eventually was able to speak with him about Salvation. After several visits he at last was privileged to pray with the man and the Captain said that this man became his friend.

Grandpa arrived in America on the 14th of May, 1892. Hanna Ouchterlony's recommendation had been that Swedish speaking officers be sent to America. No one thought to mention that they also had to know English in order to be able to communicate with Americans. This came as quite a surprise to Grandpa. However, he eventually became proficient enough in the language to act as translator for many officers and dignitaries.

Scandinavian work in the United States was increasing all the time thus making it necessary to divide the work into geographic divisions. Grandpa was promoted to Staff Captain and was put in charge of the territory that consisted of Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska - the Central Division. His first Corps was the number two Corps in St. Paul, Minnesota.

His second Corps was the 16th Corps in Chicago, Illinois. In Sweden Grandpa had had trouble with policemen and rioters. In America he had trouble with Irish Catholics. The Army used to hold open air meetings on the west side of town. There were many pubs there and much rioting. At that time the pub owners didn't like The Salvation Army because they disturbed their trade (mainly Irish Catholics) and they tried to silence the voice of conscience that spoke through the Salvationists. So the pub owners reported The Salvation Army to the police and demanded that the leader of these meetings be arrested. One night a policeman came to the officers' quarters and demanded to see Grandpa. "Does Wiberg live here?" they asked Grandpa's assistant. "Yes," said the Lieutenant. "We want to speak to him" said the police. They had chosen the night to be sure he would be home, but Grandpa wasn't there. "What, not home in the middle of the

night?" asked the policeman. "Don't try anything with us. We won't buy that." But the Lieutenant explained Grandpa had gone to the south side to have a meeting the day before but because of the long journey they had arranged for him to stay there overnight. "He will be home tomorrow morning" explained the Lieutenant. "Tell him that he should report to the police station immediately" the policeman said before he left. When Grandpa came home and was told of the policeman's visit, he first told his Divisional Commander (Brigadier Fielding) and then he went to the police. There he was told that he was under arrest and then they locked him up in jail. And so there he sat in prison. He could well have been angry, but instead a wave of peace and happiness went through his soul because he felt he was worthy of sacrificing something for the sake of Christ. After 45 minutes the door was opened and Grandpa was taken to see the police chief. He was told there were no charges against him and without further ado he was released.

This story seems rather anticlimactic, but by putting Grandpa in jail, the police probably appeased the pub owners - at least for a while.

After serving nine Corps in the Midwest during a three and a half year period (June, 1892 - August, 1895) Grandpa was ordered east and put in command of the Swedish #2 Corps in New York City (1896). Like Captain Apelkvist, who in Sweden had had responsibility for the Corps in Gävle and at the same time for a group of male cadets, now Grandpa was responsible for the #2 Corps in New York and also had 8-10 male cadets of Swedish origin who were being prepared for the Swedish work in the United States.

Grandpa relates how The Army conducted a prayer service and "persuaded" a person to convert at that time. The hall was at 22nd street and 3rd avenue (NY) and was two stories up. One night they worked with an unhappy woman who seemed to be obsessed by the devil. To help her become saved and freed, they put a prayer ring around her in the hall. God's spirit spoke to her and she cried, but she broke out of the ring and went with slow steps toward the door. At the door she was met by a group of soldiers who knelt and once again enclosed her in a ring of prayer, but again she broke away. She went out and down the stairs, still plagued by her difficulty to make a decision. When she had gone one story down she was encircled yet again by a group of soldiers. But she still wasn't ready for salvation. She went down to the ground floor and there was met by some women Cadets. They too encircled her and prayed and pleaded with her. Now at last her resistance was broken and in the last minute, in the last place, and in the last instance she gave herself to God. She became saved and God's calling voice, together with these soldiers and cadets, won a wonderful victory.

It was at the New York #2 Corps that my Grandfather met the love of his life - my Grandmother - Anna Charlotta Petersdotter Andersson Wiberg (as she signed herself on a passport once). The story of my paternal grandparents and their family continues in Sven and Lotten Wiberg's Family.